



Press Release
11 March 2025

VISUAL ARTS PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED FOR MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 2025

New exhibitions, site-specific installations and performance pieces were announced today as part of the visual arts programme for Manchester International Festival 2025. **Michael Beard, FAFSWAG, Ryan Gander, Shilpa Gupta, Rose Wylie** and **Santiago Yahuarcani** were among artists announced for the festival, which takes place across the city from 3 – 20 July 2025.

Working with both regional and international partners, the wide-ranging programme of original new work from artists around the world will take place in venues throughout the city, including Aviva Studios, The Whitworth, Manchester Art Gallery, HOME and spaces across Rochdale.

A highlight of this year's festival is ***Football City, Art United***. (4 July – 24 August 2025), an ambitious group exhibition at Aviva Studios which pairs 11 artists and footballs to create new artwork. The project is a collaboration between World Cup and Champions' League winner **Juan Mata**, renowned curator and Serpentine Artistic Director **Hans Ulrich Obrist** and filmmaker, writer and curator **Josh Willdigg**. From interactive play arenas and sound installations to animation and sculpture, *Football City, Art United* expands the worlds of art and football and the cultural contributions both make to our daily lives.

The visual arts programme for MIF25 will also include: the first international solo exhibition of work by artist and Indigenous activist Santiago Yahuarcani; a site-specific sound installation by Shilpa Gupta; an exhibition put together by over 450 primary school children; the pop-up open studio of artist-in-residence Michael Beard; and a celebration of queer Indigenous culture, the outcome of a two-year artistic residency by artist collective FAFSWAG.

Low Kee Hong, Creative Director of Factory International and MIF, said:

“Manchester International Festival Creative Director Low Kee Hong says: “It has been an incredible journey building the MIF25 programme with such a diverse range of artists from around the world whose voices are ever more critical in these challenging times. They encourage us to lean into visions of other possible futures, encounter cosmologies unfamiliar to our own, and enter into worlds that propose a reenchantment of dreaming to rediscover our ability for joy, hope and belief in each other and our communities to build these tomorrows we want to be part of.”

Tickets for MIF25 are on sale to Factory International members from 11 March and on general sale 10am 19 March.

Programme Listings:

An Inheritance

Beckie Darlington, Andy Field and Rosabel Tan
Manchester Art Gallery
4 July – 2 November 2025

An Inheritance brings together a sprawling collection of objects, information, advice and jokes from over 450 local primary school children. Working with artists Beckie Darlington, Andy Field and Rosabel Tan, these young people have been thinking about Manchester 100 years from now and what they can leave behind for its children – from a jar of honey (in case there are no bees in 2125) to advice on how to make friends, and everything in between. At the end of summer 2025 the collection will be safeguarded with the aim of being presented again in a hundred years.

FAFSWAG: Fale Sā / Sacred House

HOME

4 July – 10 August 2025

A celebration of queer Indigenous culture, *FALE SĀ / SACRED HOUSE* will take audiences on a cultural journey into the realm of Pacific storytelling. Over the course of a two-year artistic residency, artists from the FAFSWAG collective were invited to create a ceremonial house inhabited by ancestral stories from the Pacific Diaspora of Aotearoa New Zealand and the wider Moana. The resulting work as part of MIF25 responds to the reality that home is a precarious notion for cultures in a constant state of motion and displacement. The presentation at HOME encompasses a digital art exhibition, cultural ceremony, a programme of indigenous cinema and a series of talks and public discussions.

Football City, Art United.

Juan Mata, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Josh Willdigg

4 July – 24 August 2025

An ambitious group exhibition at Aviva Studios which pairs 11 artists and footballs to create new artwork. The project is a collaboration between World Cup and Champions' League winner Juan Mata, renowned curator and Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist and filmmaker, writer and curator Josh Willdigg. From interactive play arenas and sound installations to animation and sculpture, *Football City, Art United.* expands the worlds of art and football and the cultural contributions both make to our daily lives.

Santiago Yahuarcani: The Beginning of Knowledge

The Whitworth, University of Manchester

4 July 2025 – 4 January 2026

The first international solo exhibition of works by Santiago Yahuarcani – artist, Indigenous activist and leader of the Aimeni (White Heron) clan of the Uitoto people. Working from a remote Amazonia town in northern Peru, Santiago Yahuarcani creates large-scale, narrative rich paintings exploring the relationship between the Uitoto people and the natural world using natural pigments and materials. *The Beginning of Knowledge* features more than 25 paintings from 2010 to the present, including new work.

Shilpa Gupta: Untitled

Rise Innovate Performance Centre, Rochdale

4 – 20 July 2025

For MIF25, Mumbai-based artist Shilpa Gupta has worked with different local community groups to collect stories and explore the themes of absence, longing, belonging and hope. Created in partnership with Rochdale Development Agency, the work culminates in a sound installation using a series of singing microphones at a venue in Rochdale during MIF25.

Venture Arts: Michael Beard

Michael Beard, Company Chameleon and Manchester Camerata

The Lab, Aviva Studios

4 – 20 July 2025

Venture Arts – the award-winning organisation working with neurodivergent and learning-disabled artists in Manchester – presents *Venture Arts: Michael Beard*, a pop-up open studio for MIF25. Local artist Michael Beard will

be in residence and create new large-scale work throughout the festival. On select days, The Lab will transform into a performance space and audiences will be able to see Beard, dancers from Company Chameleon and chamber musicians from Manchester Camerata respond to each other's work.

For further press information please contact:

Lara Delaney, Bolton & Quinn

Lara@boltonquinn.com / 020 7221 5000

Notes to Editors:

About Factory International

Factory International is the organisation behind Manchester International Festival and the city's landmark cultural space, Aviva Studios. Factory International commissions, produces and presents a year-round programme of original creative work and special events at Aviva Studios, online, and internationally through its network of co-commissioners and partners. It also stages the city-wide Manchester International Festival (MIF) every other year.

MIF is one of the world's leading arts festivals, and the first to be entirely focused on the commissioning and producing of ambitious new work. Staged every two years in Manchester since 2007, the festival invites world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds to create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work in venues and spaces across Greater Manchester. Previous artists include, Björk, Jeremy Deller, Akram Khan, Yayoi Kusama, David Lynch, Wayne McGregor, Steve McQueen, Yoko Ono, Maxine Peake, Skepta, and The xx.

Factory International plays an important role in the lives of Greater Manchester residents, bringing jobs, skills, training and creative opportunities. Through the Factory Academy, Factory International is training the creative workforce of the future, while its pioneering creative engagement and artist development programmes create year-round opportunities for local people to get involved, from participating in flagship commissions to shaping the organisation through involvement in its public forums.

Aviva Studios was designed by the world-leading practice Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), with Ellen van Loon as lead architect – their first major public building in the UK. Its development was led by Manchester City Council, with backing from HM Government and National Lottery funding from Arts Council England.

Factory International is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

factoryinternational.org